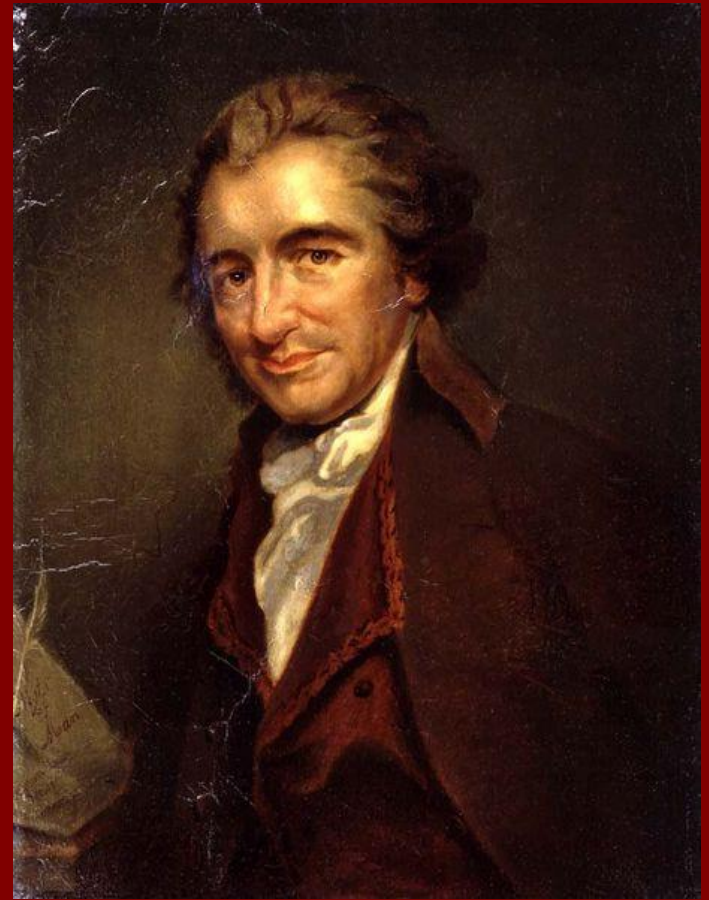




Patrick Henry

“Give me liberty or
give me death!”



& Thomas Paine

“These are the times
that try men’s souls”

The Rhetoric of Revolution

- Who remembers what rhetoric is?
- What are rhetorical strategies?

The Rhetoric of Revolution

- Rhetoric: the deliberate exploitation of eloquence for the most persuasive effect in public speaking or in writing.
- Rhetorical strategies: any technique a writer or speaker uses to convince the audience

Patrick Henry

- Born May 29, 1736 in Hanover County, Virginia
- Protested British tyranny
- Served in the Virginia House of Burgesses and the Continental Congress
- Three-time governor of Virginia
- Delivered the famous "Give me liberty or give me death!" speech.
- Died June 6, 1799 at Red Hill Plantation, Virginia

Context for Henry's Speech

- March 23rd, 1775
- Virginia House of Burgesses
- Henry has put forth the resolution that “Virginia be immediately put in a posture of defense.”
- Strong opposition
- Henry delivered the following speech in support of his resolution.
- Not written or printed by Henry
- Speeches reconstructed from the memories and notes of listeners.
- Powerful rhetoric made the speech effective and memorable.

Speech: <http://www.history.org/Almanack/people/bios/biohen.cfm>

Henry's Rhetoric

Search Henry's speech for your assigned rhetorical device:

1. Repetition of key points
2. Rhetorical Questions (questions to which the answers are obvious)
3. Parallelism (using the same pattern of words for several ideas within a sentence or paragraph).
4. Allusions (reference to well-known fictional, mythological, or historic person, place, or event).
5. Figures of speech (non-literal ways of saying something).
6. Metaphors (a comparison in which a word that normally means one thing is applied to a different thing without making the comparison explicit—e.g. “All the world's a stage.”)

Sharing Examples of Patrick Henry's Rhetoric



Patrick Henry Arguing "the Parson's Cause." Oil painting by George Cooke (c. 1800)

Thomas Paine

- Englishman—born Jan. 29th, 1737
- scholar, revolutionary, deist, failed businessman, and pamphleteer
- Influential pamphlets included *Common Sense* (1775), “the most important pamphlet in America” and the *Crisis* papers (1776).
- Opponent of slavery and organized religion, and outspoken supporter of American and French Revolutions
- Died poor and without honor, 1809.

Common Sense

- What rhetorical devices can you spot in your excerpt of *Common Sense*?
- What is Paine's main argument in the Introduction? Why is this an effective strategy?

Paine writes the following in his Appendix:

Should an independency be brought about by the first of those means, we have every opportunity and every encouragement before us, to form the noblest, purest constitution on the face of the earth. We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birthday of a new world is at hand....

- Who can explain the biblical allusion?
- How does this vision of America's destiny compare with the vision of the Puritans colonists? Jamestown colonists?

Context for Paine's Crisis Paper No. 1

- Published December 23rd, 1776

The Aphoristic Style

- Aphorism ~ a principle or general truth expressed tersely in a short, memorable form; a proverb.
- Ben Franklin wrote (or wrote down) many aphorisms, including:
 - “God helps them that help themselves.”
 - “A small leak will sink a great ship.”
 - “Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.”

...more on aphorisms

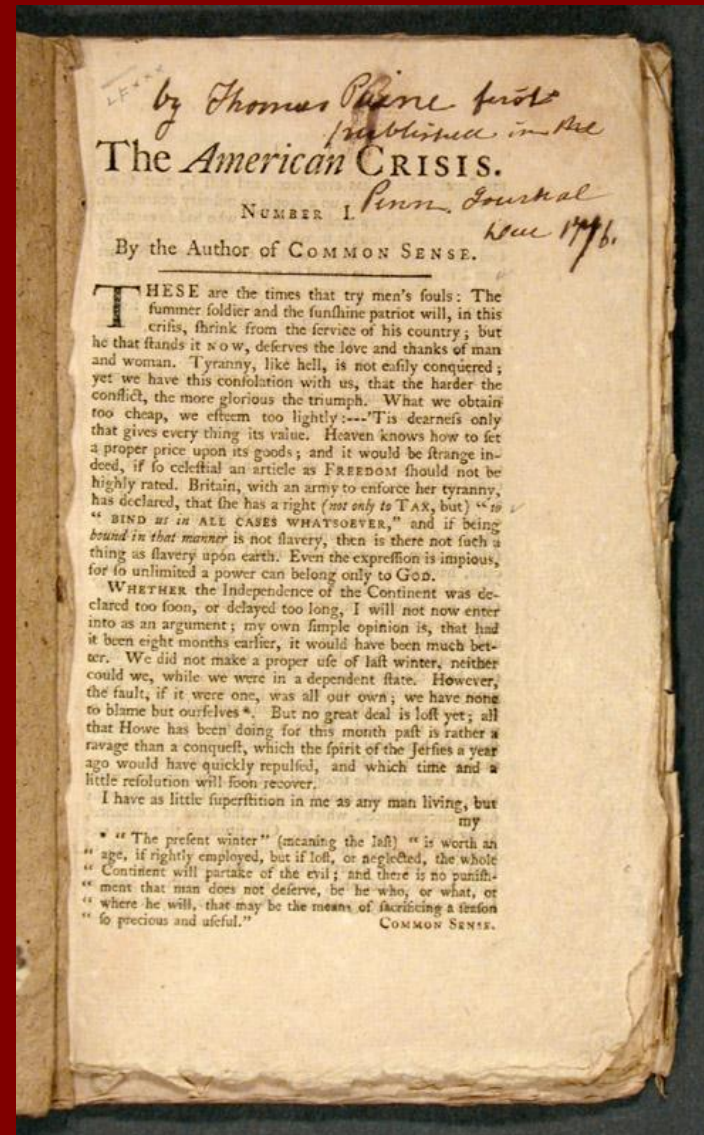
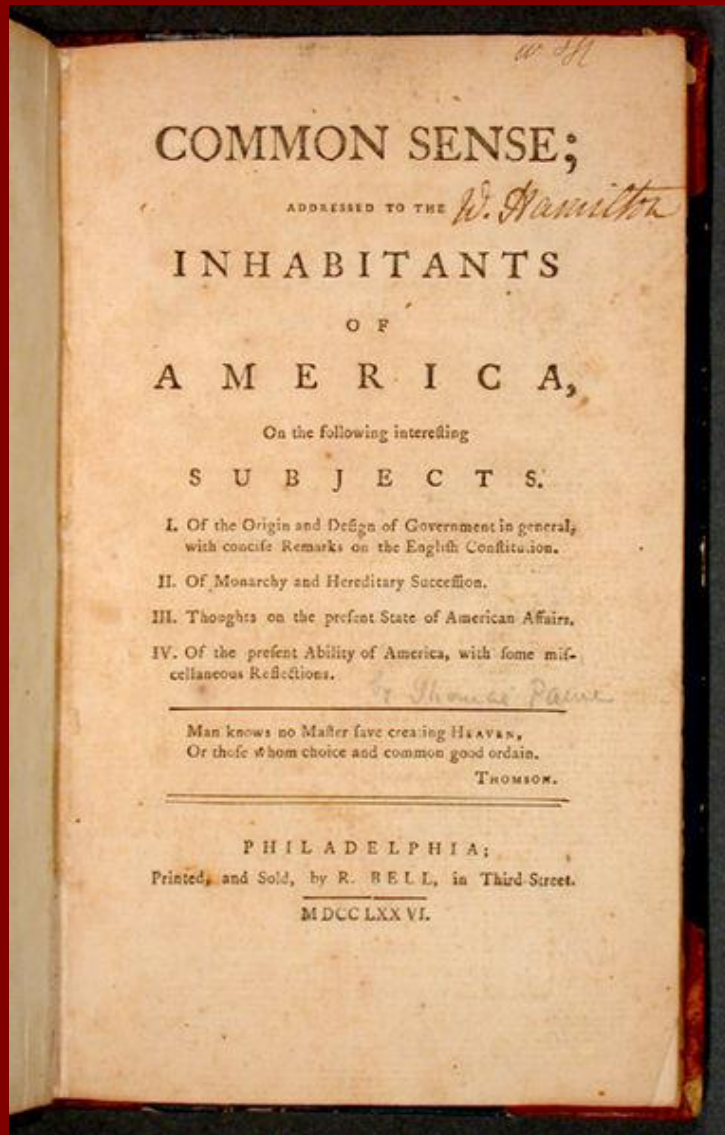
- Aphorisms are often made memorable by poetic elements such as rhythm, rhyme, assonance, and alliteration. Consider these elements in Paine's opening line from *The Crisis*, Number 1:
- “These are the times that try men's souls.”

Paine's Rhetoric

Analyze your assigned element of Paine's rhetoric.

- Aphorism: Select at least one aphoristic statement from *The Crisis* (other than the first sentence); describe what elements help make it memorable.
- Analogy: What conclusion can be drawn from Paine's analogy between the political situation in America and the case of a thief who breaks into someone's house?
- Anecdote: What point does Paine make by telling his readers about the tavernkeeper in Amboy?

Sharing Examples of Paine's Rhetoric



HW:

DUE Friday

Assignment: Write a speech either as a Patriot (arguing that the colonies should go to war with England) or as a Loyalist (arguing that the colonists should NOT go to war (two pages, double spaced)).

- Incorporate at least four rhetorical devices.
- After you print your assignment, take a pen and underline and label each rhetorical device you have intentionally used.